

THE

# Harbinger of Light.

A  
MONTHLY JOURNAL  
DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM,  
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

*"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."*

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THE recent seances for testing the physical manifestations said to occur at the house of Mr. J. P. at Castlemaine have attracted a considerable amount of public attention; and the reports of the last one, which have been published in the Melbourne papers, have doubtless been satisfactory to sceptics and all those prejudiced against the bona fides of the alleged phenomena. They may make a noise and be jubilant, but for our own parts we cannot see what they have to crow about. In another column will be found accurate reports of the four seances; at the first seance the party were as numerous, intelligent, and respectable as at the last, and equally desirous of discovering and exposing fraud or imposition. Mr. P. placed himself entirely in their hands, and requested them to take any precaution they deemed necessary. This they availed themselves of (as will be seen in our report), and when the party sat down they were all satisfied that everything was secure. There were four manifestations on this occasion, and at its termination everyone of the investigators appeared to be mystified or satisfied. It was not till some time after that the sapient reporter of the "Age" bethought him that Mrs. P. had not been searched, and suggested a theory to account for the manifestations. When the hot iron manifestation took place his suspicions fell upon Mrs. B., who, being a visitor, sat at the farthest corner of the room, and about eight feet from the table. It was presumed that she had the hot iron wrapped up in a blanket to keep it from cooling, and after nursing it for upwards of half an hour had dexterously thrown it (in the pitch darkness) over the heads of the sitters into the middle of the table. To prevent a repetition of this performance Mrs. B. was requested to take a seat beside him, and so arranged as to prevent the possibility (according to his own admission) of her aiding the mani-

festations further; but, as the manifestations still continued, he transferred his suspicions to Mrs. P., and although the subsequent manifestations seemed for a time to disarm him, he went so far as to admit that when the large Bible came he was impressed that something was coming, and felt the sensation of *something passing over his shoulder* before it touched the table, he fell back upon the fraud and collusion theory, stating to one of the party that "it was his business to pick holes in the affair if he could." He therefore concluded to debit Mrs. B. with the flat iron, Mrs. P. with the baking tin and Family Bible, and the baby with the utensil. When we state that the vessel referred to was at least ten inches in diameter, and contained about a quart of water, the improbability of its being concealed about the person of an infant in arms will be apparent. On the following morning it was suggested and urged by some of the party and Mr. P., that they should remain till the evening, and have the medium searched before sitting, but the reporter declining, the party returned to Melbourne. It was, however, proposed that a second expedition should be got up, and an arrangement subsequently made for a seance on the 13th ult., when the omission in regard to searching could be filled up. Through some misunderstanding the party did not get away in time; a seance, however, took place on the Sunday evening, at which we were present. By reference to our report it will be seen that on this occasion bulky articles were brought in, which could not be concealed about the person of either lady or gentleman. On the following evening a party of gentlemen, including the editor of the *Bendigo Evening Star*, had a seance at Mr. P.'s, under test conditions, when the iron kettle and a large wash-hand basin were brought into the room, the party being thereby satisfied of the genuineness of the manifestations. We now come to the last seance, which the press refer to as conclusive of imposture, but what are the facts? was there any detection of imposture? We find no evidence in the most adverse reports that there was. The suspicious feature is, that under the stringent conditions imposed, the ordinary manifestations did not occur. Everyone having any knowledge of mediumship knows that the presence of a powerful, opposing, mental influence, will prevent manifestations

with the best and most reliable media. Here is a woman surrounded by a crowd of sceptics, most of whom have come up with the foregone conclusion that she is a humbug and imposter, and that their business is to find her out and expose her; prior to the seance, the house is kept under surveillance by the detective, and when the party arrive she is the object of general suspicion. What wonder that she should be nervous and excited, and in a thoroughly unfit condition to be used as a media for such manifestations as were expected? yet notwithstanding this, a manifestation did take place, which the fraud theorists have failed to explain. We quote from the *Argus* report:—

"The table, in the midst of a violent agitation, suddenly stopped, and a slight tap was heard upon it, when the medium immediately cried out, and detective Black struck a light. On the centre of the table stood a tumbler filled to within half an inch of the brim with water perfectly steady, and with the lips of the glass dry. An adjournment was made, and the medium placed on the balance was found to be 80zs. lighter than when she entered the room half an hour previously; but the tumbler of water weighed separately turned the scale at 150zs."

Setting aside the known fact that mediums do lose weight during a seance, where did the extra 70zs. come from? Mrs. P. was 80zs. lighter, but the glass and its contents weighed 150zs. If Mrs. P. had the glass of water secreted about her she must have been 150zs. lighter at least. It is a pity that Mr. P.'s suggestion that a female searcher should be procured was not carried out, but until the additional weight introduced into the room has been satisfactorily accounted for by the fraud theorists the position they have taken up is quite unjustifiable.

It is really amusing to read the articles in the daily papers in reference to the Castlemaine manifestations. The fate of Spiritualism is supposed to hang upon them, and with their failure the whole fabric is expected to crumble into dust. Physical manifestations at the best are but one link in the chain of evidence of the truth of spirit intercourse, and not an important one. The intelligent manifestations are the most convincing to the intelligent mind, and in spite of the opposition of egotistical scribblers, Spiritualism continues steadily to progress, especially among the thinking classes. Were all the physical manifestations blotted out, it would not materially affect the progress of Spiritualism, or in the least injure the rational philosophy upon which it is based. But in reference to the manifestations in question, Mr. P. does not even claim to be a spiritualist, or call them spirit manifestations. Hence if they were even proved to be impostures, which as yet they are not, the onus of responsibility would not even rest with the spiritualists, individually or collectively. We had reason to think they were produced by spirits, and as far as our investigations have gone they have been confirmatory of our idea. Our object in arranging the seances with Mr. P. was to thoroughly test the matter, and if convinced of the fact that solid substances were as alleged brought by some supermundane power into a closed room, to demonstrate it as far as practicable to the public. Mr. P. has offered every facility and adopted every reasonable suggestion that has been made, with the view of making the test as complete as possible, and we cannot imagine that any rational man or woman would have acceded to the proposed conditions where failure or detection were a certain consequence if the thing were a juggle. We have to thank him for the trouble he has taken on our behalf, and if he is desirous to push the

matter still further (which we think he should do), we shall be happy to co-operate with him. We cannot conclude without a few words of pity and contempt for the miserable fellow who disgraces the pages of the *Daily Telegraph* of April 22nd with several columns of misrepresentation, slander, and abuse. Heedless of the information given him in Melbourne that he would not be admitted to the seance, he proceeds to Castlemaine to demand admission from Mr. P., but that gentleman is obdurate, and the *Telegraph* man being left out in the cold, returns to Melbourne and pours out his bile and venom in the paper referred to, but as is usually the case with spiteful people he has overshot the mark, and disgusted the more reasonable opponents of Spiritualism. He is only "kicking against the pricks," which is a very irrational proceeding, and certain to produce discomfiture in the end. Let us hope he will gain wisdom by experience, and learn to write more honestly and temperately in the future.

## Poetry.

### PETER MCGUIRE; OR, NATURE AND GRACE.

It has always been thought a most critical case,  
When a man was possessed of more Nature than Grace;  
For Theology teaches that man from the first  
Was a sinner by Nature, and justly accurst;  
And "Salvation by Grace" was the wonderful plan,  
Which God had invented to save erring man.  
'Twas the only atonement he knew how to make,  
To annul the effects of his own sad mistake.

Now this was the doctrine of good Parson Brown,  
Who preached, not long since, in a small country town.  
He was zealous, and earnest, and could so excel,  
In describing the tortures of sinners in Hell,  
That a famous revival commenced in the place,  
And hundreds of souls found "Salvation by Grace;"  
But he felt that he had not attained his desire,  
Till he had converted one Peter McGuire.

This man was a blacksmith, frank, fearless and bold,  
With great brawny sinews like Vulcan of old;  
He had little respect for what ministers preach,  
And sometimes was very profane in his speech.  
His opinions were founded in clear common sense  
And he spoke as he thought, though he oft gave offence;  
But however wanting, in whole or in part,  
He was sound, and all right, when you came to his heart.

One day the good parson, with pious intent,  
To the smithy of Peter most hopefully went;  
And there, while the hammer industriously swung,  
He preached, and he prayed, and exhorted, and sung,  
And warned, and entreated poor Peter to fly  
From the pit of destruction before he should die;  
And to wash himself clean from the world's sinful strife,  
In the Blood of the Lamb, and the River of Life.

Well, and what would you now be inclined to expect  
Was the probable issue and likely effect?  
Why, he swore "like a Pirate," and what do you think?  
From a little black bottle took something to drink!  
And he said, "I'll not mention the Blood of the Lamb,  
But as for that river it aren't worth a —;"  
Then pausing—as if to restrain his rude force—  
He quietly added, "a mill-dam, of course,"

Quick out of the smithy the minister fled,  
As if a big bomb-shell had burst near his head;  
And as he continued to haste on his way,  
He was too much excited to sing or to pray;  
But he thought how that some were elected by Grace,  
As heirs of the kingdom—made sure of their place—  
While others were doomed to the pains of Hell-fire,  
And if e'er there was one such, 'twas Peter McGuire.

That night, when the Storm King was riding on high,  
And the red shafts of lightning gleamed bright through  
the sky.

The church of the village, "the Temple of God,"  
Was struck, for the want of a good lightning rod,  
And swiftly descending, the element dire  
Set the minister's house, close beside it, on fire,  
While he peacefully slumbered, with never a fear  
Of the terrible work of destruction so near.

There were Mary, and Hannah, and Tommy, and Joe,  
All sweetly asleep in the bedroom below,  
While their father was near, with their mother at rest,  
(Like the wife of John Rogers with "one at the breast.")  
But Alice, the eldest, a gentle young dove,  
Was asleep all alone, in the room just above;  
And when the wild cry of the rescuer came,  
She only was left to the pitiless flame.

The fond mother counted her treasures of love,  
When lo! one was missing—"O Father above!"  
How madly she shrieked in her agony wild—  
"My Alice! my Alice; O, save my dear child!"  
Then down on his knees fell the Parson, and prayed  
That the terrible wrath of the Lord might be stayed.  
Said Peter McGuire, "Prayer is good in its place,  
But then it don't suit *this* particular case."

He turned down the sleeves of his red flannel shirt,  
To shield his great arms all besmudged with dirt;  
Then into the billows of smoke and of fire,  
Not pausing an instant, dashed Peter McGuire.  
O, that terrible moment of anxious suspense!  
How breathless their watching! their fear how intense!  
And then with great joy! which was freely expressed  
When Peter appeared with the child on his breast.

A shout rent the air when the darling he laid  
In the arms of her mother, so pale and dismayed;  
And as Alice looked up and most gratefully smiled,  
He bowed down his head and he wept like a child.  
O, those tears of brave manhood that rained o'er his face,  
Showed the true Grace of Nature, and the Nature of  
Grace;

'Twas a manifest token, a visible sign,  
Of the indwelling life of the Spirit Divine.

Consider such natures, and then, if you can,  
Preach of "total depravity" innate in man.  
Talk of blasphemy! why, 'tis profanity wild!  
To say that the Father thus cursed his own child.  
Go learn of the stars, and the dew-spangled sod,  
That all things rejoice in the goodness of God—  
That each thing created is good in its place,  
And Nature is but the expression of Grace.

## THE DOCTRINE OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

BY A DISEMBODIED SPIRIT.

Eternal punishment! That we should discourse on  
such a subject is indeed strange—wondrous strange—  
after an experience of more than half a century in a  
condition, where every hour, every instant, proves that  
there is not the smallest iota of truth, in a theory so  
horribly unjust and cruel.

But now, we descend to the circles of earth, and of  
necessity perceive the great darkness that overhangs  
Christendom; the weight that presses upon the human  
soul; the distressing and debasing effects arising from  
creeds—dogmas of the past—which however useful in  
their day, now exercise only a pernicious and a baneful  
influence.

Yes, we perceive those things, because all nature is  
to us transparent, every human soul is a book we read,  
and we hear the silent voices of mankind, more  
especially of Christendom; imploring help, craving for  
more light, more love. Before proceeding to an  
inquiry into the subject of punishment we must of  
necessity glance at those concerned in the matter. God  
stands first, as the author. The word punishment  
expresses the action of two powers, the Punisher and  
the Punished; or, as understood by orthodoxy, two  
individuals, one the Great *I Am, Jehovah, God, The*

*Almighty*, and the other, *Man, His Creature*. Now,  
Man as a manifestation of Nature, is under the foot of  
God quite as much as a worm could be under the foot  
of Man. God, then, is the first branch of the subject  
for consideration. We find it most difficult to enter  
upon our task, so cruel and so false are the ideas of  
Man relating to God. The grand open book of Nature  
is the Word of God. Oh that the world on which you  
live should have revolved so often, with all its  
manifestations of benevolent supervision, written in  
figures "that the wayfaring man though a fool" may  
not mistake, and yet, that Man should be so ignorant,  
so like a child, perceiving not the simple indications of  
its own identity. God was better appreciated, and  
more correctly known, ages past than now. For God  
is, and was seen to be, in the blade of grass, in the  
leviathan of the sea, in all things great and small, and  
the Man who thinks he can see more of God in some  
ancient writings, however sacred they may be; he who  
can see more of God in these writings than in the dew-  
drop; than in the ocean; than in the coral reefs; than  
in the intellect of Man; only shows the darkness, the  
heavy weight pressing him deep down, into the gloomy  
shadow of superstition and ignorance. Consider the  
depth of meaning conveyed by the word *Father*. In  
the presence of that word, Awake! unlock the character  
of the Divine Being, and be comforted to all eternity.  
Father! He who loveth as no man loveth, He who *is*  
Love. The two words, Love and Father, are so  
intimately connected, that between them there is no  
room for hate, no place for punishment. These ideas  
were expressed hundreds of years before the days of  
Jesus, and by heathen philosophers. Oh! that they  
were written everywhere in letters of fire, that they  
might be seen and read by all. For when reviewing the  
distant past, when collecting together all that is  
beautiful in the records of that past, all that shows  
indications of a belief in Truth and Love, it is refreshing  
to be able to discern upon the Christian path, 1800  
years ago, the vitality of those great principles.

Under present circumstances, we are driven to  
confine ourselves solely to the records of Bible Chris-  
tians, but we feel inclined to break away, and show to  
you, and to the world, that in the writings of the meek  
Krishna, may be found glowing indications of the  
principle of Love, a vivid sense of justice and humility,  
combined with a more worthy conception of the Deity,  
than we can find at the same period, among the Jewish  
writings now adopted by Christians. The Chinese, for  
instance, are spurned as an inferior people, they may  
even be so, but when the Christian religion has passed  
through the same furnace of lengthened experience by  
which theirs has been tried, it will not be difficult to  
discover as much good in the one *considered* heathen, as  
in the other *called* Christian.

From this, you will at once be led to understand the  
probability, if you cannot recognise as a certainty, that  
the whole system of religion in every clime, springs  
from the human organization; proceeds from the  
requirements of an animal, having a progressively  
religious nature.

No matter whether he be wild or civilized, the same  
principles form the foundations of his being, just as the  
blood circulates in the same manner through the veins  
of the black, and the white man.

In the estimation of Him who has created both, there  
is no difference. The one believes a lie, the other with  
a grosser idolatry, exhibits a falsehood. The one  
believes his communications to have come direct from  
Deity, the other regards them as having come from the  
Supreme Being. When the question of evidence  
arises, who can say which of the two is right. All of  
these, both Christians and Heathens, believe in a God,  
and they believe in a Devil, for *their great ignorance* as  
to the true character of the Divine Being, disables them  
from perceiving that Good and Evil proceed from the  
same source. One fountain throwing forth two  
streams, one *apparently* antagonistic to the other, one  
force attracting, the other repelling; and here may be  
found the cause, the apparent necessity, for the  
existence of natural punishment.



We have now to consider the being to be punished, and we prefer taking the orthodox description of Man, in order that those who are free, may perceive the condition of those who are fast bound by the bonds of Bible slavery.

Man as described in the Bible is a poor creature, of little credit to his Maker, and that description indicates the low mean conception entertained of God as the Creative Power. Man; made, moulded as the potter moulds the clay, roughly, into a dead form, and then the life breathed into the nostrils of the form of clay, inflating the lungs to set in motion the juices of the image. This creature made in this way, of the dust of the earth, soon grows to be a free agent, superior to the angels it is said, equal to the arch-angels, and if so, superior to God. For the power of the archangel Satan seems to have been too great for Deity.

It appears by the record, that God could not have taken into consideration the claims of justice, for in making *Man* a free agent, he did not make him strong enough to resist the wiles of that Being, who was permitted, notwithstanding man's weakness, to successfully tempt, and further degrade him.

Can any thinking man, in the full possession of his faculties, contemplate these transactions with patience, analyze the characters of Adam and Eve, or trace in these two creatures, the origin and growth of the principle of evil.

It is too ridiculous, it is too absurd. It is so unreasonable, that having given you the key-note, we would prefer leaving others to trace in the chain of orthodoxy, the trail of the Serpent over the weary path of 4000 years, until we can again consider *Man* in the days immediately following the birth of Jesus.

It was one of the immortal sayings of Krishna, three or four hundred years before the birth of Christ, that whenever ignorance, wickedness, and crime, seemed to prevail on the earth, he would again appear upon the scene to check it; to save the world from utter destruction; these are not the exact words, but they are the ideas embodied in his expression.

If there be truth in history, then, at the time when Christ came, his advent was a great necessity, for the darkness was such as might almost be felt. The house of God was made "a den of thieves," in the same sense that it is made a den of thieves in this age.

Our language may be considered offensive, but wounds in the body must occasionally be probed.

The priests of Judea then, like the priests of Christendom now, made use of the religious instincts of the people to establish a regular business by which to forward their worldly interests. It was then, as it is now, an outward indication, indeed, it was the *only* indication of the religious status of the people.

At the time of the Nazarene Reformer, men had so far developed, that the faintest glimmering of an idea existed that there was a life to commence when the earth life ended, but there were then, as there are now, innumerable doubts as to what the nature of that life was to be. The God who had been presented in the past was essentially a God of war, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, this formed a portion of the religious belief of the people, hence, one of the greatest difficulties which Jesus had to contend against, was the existing prejudice which demanded punishment for every apparent crime.

It is not easy even now, to introduce newer and more liberal ideas, and this reflection should make you very considerate. It should supply a light, by which to read and better understand, the full significance of the life of Jesus.

He had many truths to teach which men were not able to bear, and he made use of parables, so simple in some cases, so suited to the comprehension of infant minds, that the merest child can understand them. Parables signifying that the day of the *God of Vengeance* was passing away, intimating that the Great Deity was not a King robed in armour, with a flaming sword, demanding an eye for an eye, but a Father; who was willing, nay eager, to wash away or blot out, the transgressions, the ignorant shortcomings of His repentant children; and that parable of the Prodigal

Son, at times so misrepresented, is capable of giving much true light to the world, light more useful than a light house on the most dangerous of coasts, because so much more depends on it. The child in knowledge, the young man, wilful and ignorant, after spending all that he possessed, is represented in the parable, as one who tried to the very utmost, the patience of his father. Totally regardless of that Father's love and reasonable wishes, he had taken to himself his rights, his family portion, had gone forth far from his home, to squander his means, and offend, or outrage, every law of his being. But the hour of repentance arrives, and he becomes anxious to return. Yes; because the evil had inflicted its first rough punishment. Ruined, hungry, and forsaken, feeling his own debasement he sorrowfully returns; willing to do anything, to regain the happiness he once enjoyed in the love of the Father he had offended.

In this parable the human family is represented in every grade, not the rich young man in particular, nor the beggar; neither the wild savage, nor the cultivated man, but Humanity at the door of the Universal Father, there to find the Infinite arms outstretched in love, a precious welcome freely offered where it was not expected; no cold welcome either, but the fatted calf is killed, rings and raiment are provided, and the Father's house presents all the indications of sincere rejoicing, over the sinner that repenteth.

Humanity has hitherto, with a wicked perversity, trampled upon this great story, at the same time pointing upwards to the Father only to represent him as a vengeance seeking brute, to be loved and worshipped as the God of Christians.

Is it necessary in these days to speak in parables?; is there so much bigotry, darkness, and superstition remaining, that men are not yet able to see the glory surrounding the God who is manifested in Nature? a brilliant light that illuminates all things, and proclaims the Creator of *Man* to be "Our Father who is in heaven. Hallowed be His name." Consider for an instant an ideal type of an earthly father: A man, loved and respected it may be, in society, of mature age, and proved worth, in possession of more than an average endowment of the faculties called good, recognized by the world as a god-like man, showing wisdom in directing his household, and cleverness in the world as a man of business; sons and daughters he may have, six perhaps, and in each member of that little family, different powers will be manifested. The differences can all be accounted for, by a clairvoyant study of the organisms of the parents, and the circumstances under which the respective births occurred. Possibly under good circumstances the first is born and partially reared, guided and protected by the young parent not yet made wise by care and sorrow. The child of his early hopes, petted, pampered, and spoiled, grows to manhood, only to break away from the control of its parents, and become a moral and physical wreck, dark, dissipated, and dishonest.

The children following the eldest are generally more fortunate, and prove a comfort to their father's declining years; and now his hair is grey, the evening of his life has come, and he hears his children whisper to one another that their eldest brother is returning, sorrow-stricken and shattered, to ask his father's forgiveness.

And here Nature prevails, the last moments of the old man's life are brightened by the discovery that the prodigal *has* returned, determined to live the remainder of his days in harmony with his highest sense of right, weak though that sense may be. That young man's career may have darkened the whole life of his aged parent, but the profound repentance of the erring one, is to the father as a flood of joy, which washes all the past away.

And does God love less than Man? To say so, is blasphemy. *God, is Love.* Oh, that we could take the bigots who teach otherwise by the ears, and compel them to look at the smile upon the face of Nature, force them to observe the words of forgiveness written there, and require them to say in the face of God and Man, whether they can detect any signs of vengeance, or of hate, in the outward manifestations of Him who is

invisible. Methinks, the most bigoted would tremble in his shoes, before he would dare to say, Yes? "Let God be true and every man a liar." Let the sun cease to shine, and the moon to give its light, let the whole earth shake, and the stars fall from heaven, but there can be no hate in God.

If God were to possess the orthodox character you might naturally expect these portents to occur, the graves to be opened up, or the veil of the temple to be rent in twain, but He is unchangeable, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

He is Almighty, All-Loving, and All-Wise. Take from the Deity *one iota* of knowledge, and He is no longer All-Wise, take from Him one tiny particle of Love, and He is no longer All-Loving.

Attribute to Infinite Perfection one speck of caprice; the merest suspicion of the principle of hate, and you entirely destroy the consistency of the Divine character. Ages ago, wise men professed to know God, and described their conceptions of Him; now, the wisest men know nothing about Him outside of nature. When I was upon earth, I had my own opinion of the nature of God. I often saw Him in the flowers, often rejoiced in Him as he He marched across the fields in the sunlight; in the flitting clouds; and, as the shadows passed over the fields of corn, in these I watched Him, and oft-times, as the corn waved its head, I thought of the Great Power which caused it all to bend at the same moment. At such times, a strange figure would arise in my mind, whereby I likened each ear of corn to a man—to the human race—all bent, as it were, to the breath of God, to his laws: but these reflections were unknown to the vast majority. Travellers rode and drove past, travellers of the humbler sort passed by on foot, but few regarded the corn as I did, or read in its waving the lesson I saw there. But these reflections of mine were but shadows, faint glimmerings, feelings I did not understand, feelings which were swept away in the church I attended on the Sabbath day. For, the figure held up to me was so cramped, God was made to appear so small, possessed of so little power, that all my nobler conceptions of the Deity vanished, and instead of them I thought He could not sway a field of corn, much less make it grow.

But when my earth life had ended, and the spirit vision opened, I found myself surrounded with manifestations of God's power and love, grander, far more beautiful than I can describe, and in them, I again saw God; not as the Churches teach Him; not as ministers picture Him; but, as Nature speaks of Him: His name praised by the hosts of heaven in their lives, and not by repetitions of the word Hallelujah! after the manner of earthly choirs.

The hosts of heaven have taught me, that to know God is to know nature, to know more of nature, is to know more of God; and the more of nature you know, the more of God you have to learn, for as nature opens out, God becomes more incomprehensible.

But the fashion of the Churches is to look for God among the earliest expressed conceptions, of rude semi-barbarous Man, to find Him in the contracted figure supplied by the writings of past ages; then the outer world becomes dark and confusing, and you see not God, but the Devil, not Good, but Evil. Beyond the manifestations of God that I see in spiritual and material Nature, I know little or nothing of God yet, nevertheless my spirit constantly yearns with love towards Him, towards that Infinite Principle which is the Father of my being, the fount of my great happiness, and the cause of all things.

Holding these worthier conceptions of God, how can we patiently turn to consider those which arise from the debasing doctrine of Eternal Punishment.

We know that everything works by law; by law I can trace the unfolding of my mind; by law you can trace the unfolding of the physical form of an infant; by law you will yet be able to trace the unfolding soul and spirit of Man; by the same principle of law all things live and unfold themselves. Why do you water the tender plant on the dry, parching, summer day; because, if you do not—Eternal Punishment will be its portion; but man is "better than the grass, which

to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven." The fish you catch and leave on the dry earth, also dies. Why? Because the law by which it lived, has been disregarded. The bird flying joyously through the air, is struck by a stone or other substance, and falls to the earth; not because it is a great sinner, or for any act of its own, but because the law by which it lives and flies has been disregarded.

The blight comes and destroys a crop, the farmer may use all his skill and knowledge without effect, the harvest is lost and he suffers. Is it on account of his sins? Certainly not; but because a law of nature is operating, of which man knows nothing, a law which will continue to operate disastrously, until the unfolding of man's faculties, enables him to discover, how to control that law, and make it work beneficially. The child in the commencement of its earth progress, crawls along the ground, in time it will walk, but in its first attempts to do so, it falls. Perchance, it is seriously injured, so seriously as to involve injury to body, soul and spirit. For, an accident to the body will frequently affect the development of the soul and spirit. These are the results of unskilfulness, which is ignorance. But, are they eternal?

A man, or a child, may be scalded, burned, and must of necessity suffer the penalty, physical pain. God, who has created Man with such a form, has arranged laws for its protection, instituted penalties which are self-inflicted, which warn Man against the repeated violation of the principles of existence. If he would be free from pain, he must observe *all* the laws of his being.

And so it is with moral and spiritual laws. If they are disregarded, then self-inflicted consequences follow. There are moral crimes committed, more or less, by everyone; but never, never failing to be followed, by self-inflicted punishment. If you have not discovered it, you will yet find; that you have never, in thought, word, or deed, violated a moral or intellectual law, without imposing on yourselves, a moral or intellectual penalty; never indulged a sinful thought, without planting the germ of a noxious weed, which, sooner or later must be uprooted. If God has so arranged nature, that the disregard of physical laws is followed by physical punishment, and the disregard of moral and spiritual laws, by moral and spiritual punishment, where is the justice, where is the necessity for further severity? If an earthly parent condescends to brutally ill-use his child, however great the child's crime may have been, if nothing will satisfy him but breaking his child's bones, the neighbours abhor him, he at once loses his place as a human being, and is regarded as a brute; and "shall Man be more just than his Maker"? Can Man be reasonably expected to love God, if instead of the warning penalties we have spoken of, God indulges in hatred, malice, vindictiveness, and endless cruelty towards his helpless children.

Men cannot love God until they are satisfied that God loves them, no servant can respect a master who requires him to make bricks without clay, and cruelly ill-uses him if he fails to do it. No, every child will hate a cruel, brutal father, or, if he does not exactly hate him, there will be an entire absence of love, and without love there is no influence to preserve respect. That Being, whom you are taught by the churches, delights to cast His creatures into endless torment, can neither love them, nor be worthy of their love; can have no existence, save in the diseased imaginations of gloomy fanatics.

We have seen, then, how false are the impressions that prevail among men as to the nature of God, and the punishment of those who break his laws—impressions gathered chiefly from ancient writings, writings which should not, in truth, form part of modern Christian religion.

But let it not be thought that wrong-doers in this life will find no penalties awaiting them in the next.

Sin, whether the result of ignorance or otherwise, never escapes its natural punishment. "Whosoever knoweth my Father's will—or the laws of God—and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." The wicked or negligent life on earth, is attended with



natural, corresponding evils in the life to follow; as we sow in the present, we shall reap in the future. There are crimes of different magnitudes; murder, theft, dishonesty—considered in its widest sense;—all are violations of laws implanted in the human spirit, and the consequent evils which follow the commission of crime of every degree, must be outgrown; if not in earth life, then in that which is to come, altho' ages of your time may be consumed in the process. I will instance the case of a man who debases his manhood, and whom the reformer of old referred to, when he said "The drunkard cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven." So many evils follow in the train of this vice, it so mars the condition of the man addicted to it, that his life is worse than wasted, worse than wasted, because his life will reveal so many actions full of evil results, which will hang about his progressive spirit, haunt and depress him, and form indeed a punishment, equal to the pains of earthly fire. He not only inflicts an injury on society, but it may be that he degrades a wife, and perpetuates the evil characteristics of his own body and mind, in his unfortunate children. *His* will be the punishment that gnaws the very vitals of a man's being; and it will continue until his children, and all others who have been contaminated, either directly or indirectly, by his example or otherwise; until they have recovered by his efforts, and the efforts of others, from the evils he has brought upon them.

While the children remain in darkness—though be it even for ages—the father cannot progress beyond that stage of darkness, and an ever increasing sensitiveness will only render him more conscious of his responsibility, and drive him almost mad, in his endeavours to overcome the effects of his mis-used life on earth. *This is truly punishment, and there is justice in it.* It is not always the greatest criminal on earth, who suffers most in the spirit world; very often, it is those who appear to be least criminal, but who have known and knowingly violated, sacred natural laws; and yet, some of the evils that most shock humanity, arise from the irresistible working of Nature's laws, some men commit acts of violence by the same law which causes others to be humble, loving, just and good.

Until you have a knowledge of the laws that control man's being; the construction and working of his brain; the various forces that excite him to action; until then, there will be a dark veil before you, and deeds of violence will be terrible to all. The only way to meet this difficulty will be for men to investigate the laws that govern human action; not to exert themselves after the evil is done; after the poison is circulating through the veins of social life; not then, by other acts of violence, equally cruel, to attempt to remove an evil without removing the source from which it flows.

In the spirit world, the man who has wasted his life, frequently dies grieving on that account; he awakes to consciousness grieving; will continue to grieve for a long time, but that is not sufficient; a determination must arise in his mind, to undo some of the ill effects of his useless, reckless, thoughtless life. It is the action of the will that will profit him in the end. Another may meet his last moment upon the scaffold, meet it with a feeling of defiance, snap his fingers at what the world calls punishment, and enter upon the next life in the same proud, defiant spirit, there to associate with those like unto himself. How long he may remain in that state, will depend upon circumstances, over some of which he may have no control; but Nature's laws are infallible, and sooner or later, an internal growth will be felt, however slow or imperceptible it may be, there will be an unfoldment, causing the man to think, to feel, and to regret; but the day of his darkness, and the term of his punishment, will not draw to a close until he begins to aspire, until a longing for progress is awakened within him.

In conclusion, we do not come to support the old teachings of the past; the truth that is in them will remain, but where there is error we wish to strike it away, and implant fresh truth in its place.

The world, at least that portion of it which has not felt the grip of the criminal laws of man, may demand

a punishment for every crime, but this only indicates the widespread darkness; it only shows how all eyes are closed to the causes of Crime, and thus it is that crime increases, notwithstanding the rapid unfoldment of the intellectual faculties of the human race. Men have made themselves well acquainted with the outward manifestations of humanity, but they are terribly ignorant of the laws that control it, the magnetism or force that moves within. Here is the key, it is for Man to use it. Everyone can do much, in the present and in the future, towards reducing the long list of evils from which humanity is suffering, and by reducing them, weaken the causes, which of necessity produce the sorrowful consequences of self-imposed and self-inflicted punishment; and by giving to humanity clearer views of present duty, enable them to entertain brighter and better hopes of the times to come.

## SERIOUS TROUBLE IN THE METHODIST HELL.

BY ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

In the magnificent Mission Rooms of the Methodist Book Concern, situated on the most fashionable corner of Broadway and Eleventh street, the prosperous preachers of the denomination in New York and vicinity hold regular weekly meetings for the purpose of gossiping over church affairs; and sometimes by the merest accident, they seem to approximate to the sphere of ideas, at least near enough to smell the fathomless subject of hell, and to confess how exceedingly slender is the thread of infinite grace upon which they hope to reach the private Paradise of Methodism, somewhere in the eternal world.

They have among them an agitator significantly called Dr. True—which is his veritable name—whose specific function seems to be to stir up angry feelings, great consternation, irrepressible fear and tremblings, and unutterably horrible forebodings, by proposing for discussion such soul-harrowing and heart-rending questions as these: "Shall the wicked be finally destroyed? Will the wicked in hell finally become extinct? Are the future punishments of the wicked permanent? Are the conscious punishments of the wicked endless, or are the punishments of the wicked in hell, parallel to the eternal bliss of the righteous in heaven?"

These frightful and wicked questions, which are enough to overthrow the whole Methodist Concern, were taken up last Monday (Jan. 6th), in the Mission Rooms aforesaid; and the first speaker, an elderly clergyman of some note, who trembled in his every spiritual joint, remarked that "the subject of hell must not be ignored. The foundation of the Church stands upon this question! Why shut out the light? [He probably meant the light of Hell!]. During the past week," he continued, warming up to the healthy subject, "I have been approached by the members of my congregation, saying, 'I see that the Methodists are dropping their eternal damnation.' If the punishment of the wicked is not endless, then the joy of the righteous is not. One doctrine stands with the other. If the views promulgated by Dr. True be allowed to go unanswerd, it will make me desperate. My very soul is absorbed. It's an awful thing with me. I propose the following: "Do the Scriptures give hope that the wicked shall finally cease to exist?"

Some Spiritualist philosophers will here note a gratifying "coincidence of genius" irrespective of partition walls and sectarian barriers—in this: That, whereas the above-mentioned minister is "desperate" lest the rule which accomplished the curtailment of the eternity of hell-torments would reach over into the the Methodist Paradise, and result in a corresponding abridgement of the joys of the Methodist angels, of whose choiring hosts he flatters himself he will count one—indeed, what logic can be more palpable and taking than the saying that "a stick that has one end, has two" or, in other words, that "whatever has a beginning will also have an end"—consequently it

follows that "if the pains of hell and the joys of heaven have a beginning, they must also at some time, dry up, unless it be discovered that the fiat of the Almighty, by instituting and keeping up a perpetual miracle, regardless of expense, ensures the eternity of the experiences appropriate to both hemispheres of his universe. Prove that eternal punishment will, at some time in the great future, come to an end—in the annihilation of the wicked, by "one fell swoop" of the wrathful Infinite Power—and where is your evidence that there will not be also, at some time, a total destruction of all the sweet Methodist candidates of eternal happiness? In fact, this branch of the subject is so appalling, to say nothing of its pathos and the terrible tax it imposes upon one's gentlest susceptibilities, that the reader will be good enough to pardon me if I refuse to dwell longer upon it.

Let us, for a moment's relief, turn our mutual attention to the remarks of the agitator, Rev. Dr. True. He proceeded to say, in reply, that there "must be a difference between utter nothingness and destruction. For instance, a house can be destroyed, or a tree, but it is a something. I am not so sanguine of my views that I believe the whole Christian Church will sooner or later embrace them. If the other question does not meet your approbation, try this: "Does the future punishment of the wicked imply their eternal consciousness?"

This question brought another minister to the red-hot point quicker than you can boil an egg. He sprang to his feet full of power, and thus relieved himself: "We have had too much of this at the last meeting, and the notices of the press have occasioned considerable talk. There is danger! (Cries of "Amen.") We are now to startle the religious community for ten weeks to come, when we should devote our efforts to something higher. *The devil is rubbing his hands gleefully*; he has never had a better chance than the present. If this question be adopted I must read up on hell, instead of warning sinners from the wrath to come. Are we to begin the year with this devilish or hellish excitement? I have no objection that this theme be discussed in March. I see reporters present from this city, from Brooklyn, Jersey City, Newark, and other neighboring places. I am not in favor of the discussion of this question with open doors." (Sensation.)

This irresistible sensation extended to the seething soul of another Methodist, the Rev. Mr. Corbett (for some time located in Newark, N. J.,) who also said there was no use ignoring the important subject under discussion. He thought it was not endangering the salvation of souls! "Rev. John Wesley," he affirmed, "did not hesitate to speak of hell and damnation; why should we? Perhaps there may be greater ones here than he. I think this question should be discussed for the salvation of souls. If the doctrine of destruction be accepted, I go about carelessly; but make punishment eternal, and I go along carefully. I do not pretend to be an angel—(laughter)—I am liable to err, but when the doctrines of the Church are assailed, I rise to arms for its defence. You tell me to be calm. I cannot when that which is so dear to me is wronged. I know that the discussion will do good. The reason why we do not get along faster is because **WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH HELL IN OUR RELIGION!**"

It was to all a self-evident assertion that Methodists would "get along faster" as soon as the preachers infuse "more hell" in their beautiful religion. A smile of satisfaction rippled over every ministerial countenance! More hair put into mortar makes it stick better; more yeast in flour makes the bread lighter; why will not *more hell* in one's religion make it more successful among the ignorant and cowardly? Hell is an invention of ancient Eastern priests, even before the days of Zoroaster; why shouldn't little evangelical priests in our day have the exclusive use of the invention of their respected ancestors? Bro. Corbett is plucky; and pluck (ornamented with audacity) will count for more in a promiscuous crowd than an abundance of brains, coupled with the calm modesty of wisdom. So we sympathize with Bro. Corbett in his fifty-horse-power hell-enterprise; and especially do we mingle our tears

with the elderly minister who sees no hope for his ever securing anything like eternal happiness, unless there be a sure foundation of eternal suffering close by in the neighboring Empire of his Satanic Majesty. This reasoning is sound, to say nothing of its exaltation of the character of God, and not to mention its sweet, gentle humanity. We say, then, let the modern priests (whose Oriental predecessors invented both the devil and a hell,) have the unrestrained use and benefit of both "foundations in their religion."

In reply to Dr. Merwin, to Dr. Curry and others, who thought the discussion of the annihilation of the wicked would endanger the safety of souls present, Dr. True said that, "during the seven years that I have accepted this theory of destruction I have converted four hundred and fifty souls. I have not lost an iota of my interest for the salvation of mankind."

Here, again, we have reserved to us the sweet assurance that, notwithstanding his heart-rending annihilation theory, Dr. True has "converted four hundred and fifty souls!" What beautiful subjects these four hundred and fifty converts would be for microscopic investigation! Tyndall and Dr. Buchner might make a few experiments upon these sulphates of humanity, who have (*via* Dr. Corbett's ministry) escaped the fate of ultimate annihilation! What prismatic splendors might be obtained by subjecting these four hundred and fifty converts to the action of the heat-beams of the sun! From a true Methodist convert the brimstone has been eliminated, leaving nothing but the pure unsophisticated simplicity of faith in the grace of God—*via* the Methodist Episcopal Church. The exceeding minuteness of the residuum, after extracting the natural sulphurous qualities, make it necessary to employ a microscope. Four hundred and fifty converts (if the old metaphysical fathers of popular theology were not mistaken) might sit comfortably *tête-à-tête*, and promenade about on the point of a cambric needle! And what is more, (if some Spiritualist philosophers are not mistaken,) an army to the number of millions of these same converted souls might sweep headlong through the granite hills of New Hampshire without impairing the compact crystals for building purposes! Since Bro. True's assurance that his preaching for seven years has wrought such wonders, I am half inclined to accept without a murmur both the "cambric needle theory" and the "spirit headlong theory" also, and thus, by gradual steps, prepare myself for the acceptance of the sweet boon of annihilation, in case it be eventually demonstrated that the Methodist Paradise is a close corporation institution, and inaccessible to all who travel by other paths.

Still let us remember that while "there's life there's hope." In the heart of New York, amid the benefits of free schools, surrounded by the achievements of science and art, in the last half of the nineteenth century—can any rational mind believe that any assemblage of ministers could be induced to display such wholesale ignorance and indifference to the progress of ideas as is reported in the foregoing paragraphs? And yet we insist upon shouting triumphantly the heroic Galileo's maxim—"The world moves!"

WE have private letters from "Brother Peebles" up to March 25th, at which time he had embarked on the Harriet Armitage, for Hong Kong. His challenge to the clergy to discuss Spiritualism v. Orthodoxy not being taken up after waiting a fortnight, (during which time they were constantly barking and snapping, but afraid to come to the front,) he handed them over to Dr. Dunn, who appears to have treated them rather roughly, but perhaps not more so than they merited. The Rev. Dr. Copland has published his two lectures in pamphlet form. He appears to be a long way behind his time, looking upon the now generally accepted facts of mesmerism and clairvoyance as myths and fictions. Mr. Peebles proceeds *via* Palestine to England, from whence we shall, no doubt, hear of his doings before long.



## MR. DENOVA'S LECTURE.

Mr. W. D. C. Denovan delivered the third of his series of lectures, entitled "The leading Christian objections to Spiritualism examined," at the Rifles Orderly Room, Sandhurst, on Sunday, April 6th. The room was crowded. A number of the leading citizens of Sandhurst were observable among the audience, who listened with evident interest to the discourse which was prefaced by the reading of lessons and prayers from Mr. Voysey's revised prayer book. Mr. Denovan commenced his lecture with a description of the Jews and Judaism at the time of Christ's advent. The scant evidence there was as to the miracles believed to have been performed by him, the improbability of public criticism and scrutiny being brought to bear against them, whereas spiritual manifestations or miracles had to bear the severest scrutiny from its infancy, by thousands whose intelligence was far beyond that of the Jews in Christ's time. Upon what plea, he asked, should the christian miracles be accepted from the testimony of the one book, whilst modern miracles attested by thousands of intelligent living witnesses in all parts of the world are rejected. He expressed some surprise that christians should object to Spiritualism, seeing that it was confirmatory of their leading dogma of the immortality of the soul. Christianity he defined as a negative belief, being founded upon the record of what the four evangelists saw, whilst Spiritualists founded their belief on positive evidence brought home to their senses. Spiritualists say to you, "We present you with the evidence of living witnesses of unimpeachable veracity as to the facts of our religion; but as what has been revealed to us may not be accepted by you as true, enquire and judge for yourselves." He then proceeded to the examination of the leading christian objections as follows:—First, then, it has been alleged, that "When Jesus died and rose again—thus completing the plan of salvation, and the Bible contains all the revelations from God which it is necessary for man to know, the period of miracle-working was closed; and that, therefore, all intercourse with spirits is forbidden." In reply, I would point out to you that even during the lifetime of Jesus the Jewish nation were incredulous of his pretensions, and, with a few unimportant exceptions, never believed in him. He, himself, according to the scriptures, held daily converse with spirits, as also did his disciples; the early Christians continued to do so long after the Apostolic period; and that there is not a single chapter or verse in the whole of the New Testament forbidding this spirit-intercourse. It is, therefore, merely an assumption on the part of modern priesthood to say that such intercourse was forbidden. The Apostle John certainly tells his hearers to "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." And then he adds this as a test:—"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." But not a word of warning against the established practice of holding converse with spirits. Paul, too, says:—"And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Paul also urges the Corinthians to "follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts." I put it to Christians, if it was wrong to communicate with spirits, would either St John or St Paul have thus publicly countenanced it? "But, by Jesus rising from the dead as stated in 'the word of God,' did not that word prove the immortality of the soul?" Most certainly it did to those who witnessed the extraordinary phenomenon, and afterwards saw and conversed with Jesus; but unless the evidence of the fact were proved satisfactorily to mankind generally, the miracle would either have to be repeated in their case to induce belief, or the evidence of so conclusive a character, as to place it beyond a shadow of a doubt. Now, friends, you must admit, from your own knowledge, that never in the history of Christianity was there such a general unbelief in the divine revelation as there is at the present time, and that the churches with simply a negative faith are powerless to stem it. You, then, who believe in the omnipresence and over-ruling providence of God, do you not, cannot you perceive his finger in this great spiritual

movement which has sprung up in our age, as the protest of humanity against the materialist notion that when a man dies he shall not live again? Cannot you see that this much abused spiritualism which is attracting towards it thousands and millions of our race, is but in keeping with those divine revelations which have been vouchsafed to man in all ages, to lead and guide him upwards and onwards in his career of progress; and to assist in developing his better nature? Does it stand to reason, that in an obscure corner of the earth, in a bye-gone age of the world, a small tribe of men having no special claims to the favor of the Almighty, should be the exclusive possessors of the only and final revelation from Heaven? All progressive spiritualists believe that the writers of the Bible portrayed the will of God according to the light that was in them, and that their writings were the result of their intercourse with the spirit world, but these communications they do not regard as infallible, and reserve to themselves the right of criticising, rejecting, or believing them, just as they would do with those of Martin Luther, John Wesley, or Cardinal Wiseman. And if the Churches of Christendom would only recognise this right amongst their followers, there would be fewer sceptics and hypocrites, and their influence, instead of being on the wane, would be on the increase. He submitted that there was absolutely no proof that the Bible was the only and infallible word of God. He instanced the Judean and Mahomedan Bibles as having a larger number of believers in them than the Christian one. Each one claims to have the true one, and calls the other "Infidel." The Spiritualist accepted the good in all Bibles, and rejected that which appeared unreasonable and useless. If it were lawful in times past to hold communion with spirits it is equally so now, as there is nothing in the New Testament forbidding it. He then passed on to consider the second objection:—"If a new revelation was necessary, would God give it through tables?" I reply: We are not to be the judges of this, seeing that it has always been through humble means of a similar character—if we are to believe the Bible—God has done so in former ages. The Law was delivered to Moses from Mount Sinai amid the thundings and lightnings of a spiritual presence, on two tables of stone. Why on tables? Why not on parchment? God made the son of a poor carpenter one grand medium of his will to man, and passed by the princes of the house of David to do it. Why was this? But the question has no significance in this case, as spiritualists do not claim to have received a new revelation in the proper sense of the term. They only aver that an old law, by which whole nations—Christians as well as others—in former ages, held daily converse with the departed, and which through the machinations of priesthood was, for a time, rendered inoperative, is being resuscitated, the faculty in mankind for using it still existing. The table is one means of communicating, but there are many others. One of these is by writing, either through a medium, or by means of a materialised spirit-hand. There is nothing new in this, for it is stated in Daniel, fifth chapter, and fifth verse, that, at Belshazzar's feast, the fingers of a man's hand came forth and wrote on the plaster of the wall. Spiritualists can believe this to be literally true, for thousands of them have witnessed similar phenomena over and over again. Even in Sandhurst, in my own circle, although we have not yet witnessed the hand actually writing, we have heard it under test conditions, so that not a doubt remained in our minds as to its being genuine. But in older circles in England and America, the hands have been seen writing, and messages of endearment and remembrance have been given by them to persons present to take to their friends at a distance. The third and last objection, Mr. Denovan said, was "If the phenomena are genuine they are of Satanic origin." This objection, he considered, rather strengthened the spiritual hypothesis, because people would reason,—if bad spirits can come back to us why not good ones also. Spirits out of the body must be judged the same as those in the body by their words and actions. He quoted Mr. Naylor, Dr. R. Chambers, Channing, Campbell, and others, on the moral influence of Spiritualism, and urged his hearers to judge it on its merits, exercise their reason and common sense on all



that purported to come from the spirit world. "Prove all things, and hold fast that which was good." He alluded to the Christian objection that Spiritualists denied the Bible, and showed that they only denied its infallibility, but believed in its truths, and concluded as follows:—"Friends, I have thus endeavored in my two previous lectures and this one, to bring before you, in the limited time at my disposal on a Sunday evening, a few of the evidences of spiritualism, and to answer, as best I could, some of the principal scientific, as well as Christian, objections to it. If I have succeeded in exciting within your breasts an earnest desire to learn more on the subject, and persuaded you to take a friendly interest in it—and I believe, from the regular attendance with which most of you have honored me at all the lectures, that I have, I shall feel amply compensated for any little trouble I may have gone to in preparing them. Let me, before concluding, urge upon all of you the duty of honestly investigating the subject of spiritualism. In the hurry and worry of business pursuits, I well know how difficult—in the case of many at least—this is to accomplish. Yet there are numbers, who if they once fairly set themselves to the work, with a firm resolve to persevere and faint not, might find it a most agreeable task, as nearly all have done who have thus undertaken it. Oh! the intense satisfaction of knowing, for certain, that the once well beloved friend whose voice was as music in our ears, whose face and form were as familiar to us as our own, whose hand we were wont to grasp in brotherly affection, but whose step is no longer heard in our home, whose poor remains we saw consigned to their last resting place, with the words: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," said over them, and over whose grave we shed a tear of sorrow. Oh! to know that such a friend still lives, that he can come to us, speak to us, and grasp our hand once again! Is there, can there be a joy on earth greater than this? Fathers, mothers, you who have lost the child of your love, whose little footsteps you no longer hear, and whose childish prattle has long been hushed in the silence of the tomb, have you no desire to see and hear her once again? Or are the natural beatings of your heart stifled by the cold, chilling influences of a sectarian creed? Or is it that the cares of the world and the pursuit of riches, "which," in the words of old, "taketh to themselves wings and fieth away," hath so hardened you, that indifference has taken the place of affection. Son, daughter, have you so soon forgotten the sainted mother on whose knee you were wont to sit and listen as she taught you to lisp the name of God, and in words of simple eloquence, and with holy fervour, prayed to Him to bless her child? Or when you stood by her dying bed and saw her pass away with her last lingering look of affection fixed upon you, and heard her commend you to His keeping "Who can'st mark the sparrow's fall," have you no wish to see that mother once more; to again meet her gaze, and hear her utter the well remembered words: "God bless thee, my child?" To believe this of any of you, I would require to renounce my faith in human nature. No friends; in England and America, where the spirits have been able to so materialise themselves as to be recognised, thousands have flocked from far and near to see them; many have had the pleasure of seeing their relatives, and a mutual recognition has taken place, filling each heart with rapturous joy such as no heart can describe. And I feel certain that had we the same powerful mediums here, the result would be the same. We shall have them yet. A few noble, earnest souls—even in this mammon-worshipping place, who think that there are other and higher duties to perform than horse-racing and money-gambling, whose minds are more expansive and whose sympathies are of a nobler cast, are interesting themselves in the spiritual cause, and mean to investigate until they can bring your spirit friends face to face with you, as has been done in the countries I have named. There is no evidence in favor of the doctrine of the life beyond the grave so strong as the positive evidence. It puts a weapon of defence into the hands of all who love God and their neighbor, and who wish to see vice and crime and atheism banished from the minds of men, which no other evidence can do. Therefore, you who have raised the spiritual banner go forward

fearlessly in the path of duty. Be firm. Be faithful. Be true to each other. Take for your motto, "Love, progress, fidelity;" and your efforts, with the help of God and your angel ministrants, will be crowned with a success far more glorious than your brightest anticipations could have led you to expect. Thus will the spiritual gospel become, in the eloquent words of Charles Bright,—“The expositor of God to humanity.”

It was announced that the fourth and last of the series, entitled "An appeal to the people on behalf of Free Thought and Spiritualism" would be delivered some time this month.

#### LETTER TO THE DUNEDIN (N.Z.) CLERGY.

By J. M. PEEBLES.

GENTLEMEN—

While assuming that printed letters and public discourses, rightly reported, are public property, it may be noted that some of the clergy in the Province and ourselves are working quite in harmony, so far as Scriptural references and candid admissions are concerned, touching the genuineness of the spiritual phenomena. The Rev. Mr. Watt admits, with rare manliness, that upon "the validity of human testimony . . . the marvels of Spiritualism and the Christian miracles stand or fall together." This should be carefully treasured by Dr. Copland. The Rev. Mr. Watt further allows the "curious thing to be that the facts of Spiritualism are a return to the Bible instead of a departure from it;" while the Rev. Mr. Read, though admitting the reality of the phenomena, thinks them anti-biblical—the works of the devil! Bishop Nevill, believing in a God who is a Spirit, said emphatically—"I am a Spiritualist." It was the burden of his lecture to sustain the position that both good and evil angels, feeling an interest in men, influence the inhabitants of earth. Dr. Copland contends that the record of phenomena, compiled or witnessed by the Hon. Mr. Owen and multitudes of other living witnesses, may be satisfactorily explained upon the known principles of science, without a resort to spiritual causes. How forcibly this jargon of clerical contradictions reminds us of the time when all of the "Chief Priests," aiming to destroy the influence of, sought for "witness against Jesus." And "many bear false witness against him," says the Evangelist, Mark; "but their witness agreed not together."

Jeering Atheists insist that those who profess to see angels and spirits in prophetic and apostolic times were the subjects of diseased imaginations or optical illusions; Dr. Copland alleges the same of mediums, clairvoyants, and many thousands of upright honourable men of to-day, who solemnly testify to having witnessed many of the spiritual marvels of the present. Sceptics of the Thomas Paine school, while stoutly affirming that human testimony in connection with reason must be the umpire in these matters, press the point that Christian belief in Peter's release from prison by the hands of an angel (Acts xii.) rests solely upon the testimony of Peter—the same Peter who falsified, who "cursed and swore, and denied his Lord." It is recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel that "The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." If one of our Dunedin clergymen could by any chance have been in Jerusalem in those days, and had been told—"What do you think? My sainted father has risen from his grave; I saw him; others have seen him," what would have been his answer? "Impossible, my dear sir: it was a spectral illusion; or bad digestion has produced a fevered imagination. And then, do not our Scriptures say by Isaiah, "They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise." Strange spectacle! Irreligious scoffers and Christian ministers working (though, perhaps, unwittingly) in concert to overthrow the evidences of immortality. Every well-put point against the reality of modern spiritual manifestations, is an infidel javelin hurled at the temple of true Christianity.

The stale charge that I have attacked Christianity—that is, the ethical teachings of Jesus and the apostles—

is unqualifiedly false. My warfare has not been against Christianity rationally interpreted and properly understood; nor against that "pure and undefiled religion" mentioned by St. James; but against a "bieling" priesthood, and narrow cramping creeds. Why cling to antiquity? why rifle the graves of the centuries? and why desecrate God's living present by piling upon it mouldy parchments from the shelves of a persecuting past?

Christ founded no opulent Church, suggested no articles of faith, nor referred to "yearly stipends," neither did the Apostles. "Original sin," "vicarious atonement," "endless punishment," and other evangelical doctrines, were not taught by Jesus Christ; neither are such phrases mentioned in the New Testament. But the Augsburg and other Confessions of Faith say: "Original sin is the corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary taint with which even the very infants in their mothers' womb are polluted; and which, as a noxious root, produces all kinds of sins in man, and is so filthy and abominable a thing in the sight of God, that it is sufficient for the condemnation of the whole human race."

We believe that this taint is truly sin, because it makes all and every man, not even those little ones excepted that lie hid in their mothers' womb, guilty of eternal death in the sight of God." The "Short Catechism for Young Children" (published by Robert Carter and Brothers, New York) has this teaching:—

"What kind of a heart have you by nature? A heart filled with all unrighteousness. What will become of you if you die in your sins? I must go to hell with the wicked. What kind of a place is hell? A place of endless torment; being a place that burns with fire and brimstone. Doth original sin wholly defile you? Yes. What are you then by nature? I am an enemy of God, a child of Satan, and an heir of hell." "Orthodox" creeds teach and evangelical clergymen preach, the absolute eternity of hell torments. The Rev. Mr. Walworth, in a sermon upon the "rich man in hell," says:—"In these eternal fires every limb and member of their bodies (the wicked) will be for ever racked and tortured and yet never consumed." The Rev. G. Sutherland, formerly of this City, treating of eternal punishment in a published volume, speaks of "the body scarred and corrupt" as lying in the pit of perdition, a prey to the worm that never dies, and to the flame that shall never be quenched." And again he says of the sinner—"Smitten from behind by the blast of divine vengeance . . . how certain and speedy his doom, when he is at the same time dragged by the devil and driven by the Almighty!" If this is not blasphemy, will some define it? Is it strange that the ablest scientists and most profound thinkers of to-day—the Ruskins, Carpenters, Masseys, Darwins, Huxleys, Lewes, Lyells, Mills, Owens, Spencers, Tyndalls, Wallaces, Varleys, Lockyers, etc., etc.—are in no way connected with the evangelical churches of Christendom?

Spiritualism relating to the past and present—to faith and fact—is at once a science and a religion. It may be defined briefly thus: knowledge of a future existence through a present converse with angels and spirits, coupled with belief in God as the Divine Presence, Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life," and obedience to Divine law as the true means of attaining happiness and heaven. Leon Favre, ex Consul-General of France, said to me in his Parisian residence, some three years since—"The most learned men of Europe to-day are Spiritists." C. F. Varley, Fellow of the Royal Society, and by common consent the most eminent living electrician, wrote, in July, 1871, to Prof. William Crookes, who is investigating Spiritualism—"I know of no instance, either in the new or old world in which any clear-headed man, who has carefully examined the phenomena, has failed to become a convert to the spiritualist hypothesis." The famous naturalist, H. R. Wallace, F.R.G.S., declares that—"Spiritualism, teaching the naturalness of spirit communion, and resting upon the testimony of the living, must become a leading power in the world." The distinguished moral philosopher, J. H. Von Fichte, wrote, July 7th, 1872, to Mr. G. Constantine Wittig, Breslau—"I have come to the conclusion that it is absolutely impossible to account for these phe-

nomena, save by assuming the action of superhuman influences." The Rev. Mr. Beecher, admitting the manifestations to be spiritual, says emphatically "Spiritualism settles faith." The testimony of such men is worthy of the deepest consideration!

That there is an "alarm in Zion," may be inferred from the Rev. Mr. Roseby's recent address in Lawrence, who, after begging of his hearers not "to be influenced by false prophets," besought them, "Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Episcopalians, and even Roman Catholics (may such unity and brotherly love continue), to 'combine' against the 'new and beautiful faith,'—Spiritualism; and then warming up, and becoming more thoroughly inspired, he admitted that Spiritualism had begun to overthrow not only the ignorant and unlettered people, but men of science and education. It was insinuating itself into every corner, and was propagated by intelligent and high-minded people. Yes, "high-minded people," and scholars in all lands. How appropriate, in closing, the language of James Anthony Froude, M.A.! In a volume just published, this eminent historian speaks of the spiritual phenomena, as "an outcome of the scientific culture of England in the nineteenth century."—I am, &c.,

J. M. PEEBLES.

—From the "Dunedin Evening Star."

### ERROR.

An honest mind is constantly liable to err; but such a mind cannot be false. The in-wrought desire for truth presupposes the conscious existence of error in the mind; just as a desire for the possession of knowledge springs from an inward pre-consciousness of ignorance. But I would rather be in error than in ignorance. Although error is allied to pride, and, therefore, very hard to conquer, yet ignorance is profoundly indifferent, because it is satisfied with itself. Error, if honest, is anxious to obtain the truth; but ignorance, without ambition and without light, is content to remain in its own imbecility. A false-minded person is hypocritical and dangerous, and not trustworthy in any place; but an erroneous mind may be a true friend, noble, just, and patriotic. Errors are common along the interminable path of progress. Errors in feeling, errors in judgment, errors in opinion—we stumble and fall headlong over these stones in truth's highway. If we desire to possess solid reality, and have patience with ourselves and with others, while seeking for the light, we may never fail in obtaining the celestial prize.

But let us pity those minds which cling affectionately to their errors. Swedenborg wrote emphatically against persons who were "in the love of error," or who were "confirmed in the falsities of doctrine." Their judgments are warped and benighted, because their affections (spirits in prison?) cling to falsehood and error. It was Pope's opinion that "a man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong," which is but saying, in other words, that he "is wiser to-day than he was yesterday." The popular pride or undeviating "consistency"—of not changing your opinions, not acknowledging yourself mistaken—is the Apollyon of our bottomless pit of wickedness. Beware of men who refuse to look *new* evidence in the face. They shut their eyes to new light, by which alone new convictions can enter, displacing old errors in the affections and understanding. Such a bigot in society, in politics, in law, in religion, is the very Evil one! "Dare to be true," says the minister of honest and honorable progress; "nothing can need a lie." Suppose your neighbors say, "Oh, you turncoat! you weak-minded changeling! you fickle, inconsistent fellow!" Suppose the hard-shell and the iron-clad monitors of old error do hoot and sneer at you! "Dare to be true!" is the voice of your God. Remember that

"Great truths are portions of the soul of man;  
And great souls are portions of eternity."

Abandon error as soon as you discover it in any department of your nature. Remove all stones from your grain fields. One truth is better than all the errors of Christendom.

A. J. DAVIS.



## THE LYCEUM PICNIC.

THE first Picnic in connection with the Melbourne Progressive Lyceum was held on Good Friday at the Survey Paddock, Richmond. The groups assembled at the Flinders-street station to the number of 110, including the officers of the Lyceum, and proceeded by the 11 a.m. train to Picnic station. On arriving at the station they were marshalled by Mr. G. S. Manns, and marched to the camp headed by their beautiful new banner, singing as they marched. The Lyceum ground had been marked out and the standards erected by the guards and assistants; and the groups, taking up their respective positions, were put through a short course of calisthenic exercises by the conductor, and then dismissed to amuse themselves till dinner time. The call to dinner was promptly responded to, and the groups, under the charge of their leaders, were supplied with sandwiches, cake, buns, milk, and fruit, *ad libitum*. After dinner the children dispersed to amuse themselves with swings, croquet, and other amusements which had been provided. It was intended to have exercised the Lyceum in marching, calisthenics, banner exercises, and singing, but the attractions in the shape of dancing, croquet, &c., proved too much for the majority of the leaders, all efforts to call them to their posts being unavailing. The Lyceum became amalgamated with the other attendants at the paddock, the banner was upset, and the conductor thought it advisable to pack up the banner and standards. An early tea was served out to all applicants, and the majority of the Lyceum returned by the 5.15 train to Melbourne. As a demonstration the picnic was a failure, and must have disappointed those who visited the paddock in expectation of a Lyceum field day; but in other respects an enjoyable day was spent.

SEVERAL letters from persons who have attended the seances at Mr. P.'s appear in the up country papers. There is an excellent one headed "Eccentricities of Folly" in the *Bendigo Evening Star* of April 23rd, but too long for us to publish. The following one is from the *M. A. Mail* of April 24th:—

## THE CASTLEMAINE SEANCE.

Sir,—I am disappointed at hearing that the late seance at the house of Mr. P., conducted under a severe test, was, if not a failure, but a mere negation. It is only to be regarded as a failure when compared with other sittings in which the manifestations have been almost universally successful. These have varied in bulk and weight according to the intensity of the force which seems dependent on the physical and mental condition of the operators. At all these seances in which that force has been energetic, the principals enjoyed composure of mind and were not irritated by the prying suspicions of a detective searching the private apartments of a house as if in quest of concealed property. A lady's bedchamber might at least have been exempted from inquisitorial scrutiny. No one is so much to blame for admitting the detective into his private house as Mr. P. himself, who was no doubt nettled by suspicions that had been cast upon him by the reporter in the *Age* when he insinuated or inferred that a vessel containing liquid only appeared after the baby had been brought into the room. Had it not been for the baby he thought there would have been no utensil, but still the utensil was a fact, not only seen by him, but by others when there was no incidental baby in long clothes on the scene. If the reporter, however, was right in detecting the conjuring machinery by which the inferred trick was played, it was only necessary to watch the baby to unmask the magician. This was fortunately stealthily done at the late seance, but no discovery made of concealment or attempt at concealment. That nothing beyond the tumbler of water came into the apartment implies nothing, it is sufficient to know that solid substances had previously appeared in the selfsame room, when all apertures were sealed. The only question that arises is, had there at any time been trickery practised? and this question is to my thinking fairly

answered by the minute and painstaking report of details furnished by the *Age* reporter. It leads to a conclusion diametrically opposed to that which he draws. He infers imposture: now what are the circumstances? The house is examined in daylight by a detective, the walls are tried to see if they contain slip-panels, the chairs are taken up and their bottoms tried, all the articles of furniture undergo a similar search and the roof is sounded. Everything is pronounced devoid of mechanical appliances, whereas, had the conjuror's art been practised, machinery would have been found. That crucial examination sets at rest the hypothesis of imposture, seeing the articles were in precisely the same form as they were when material objects came into the room on many occasions in the presence of intelligent witnesses, some of whom so far from being spiritualists were pronounced materialists, and as such so remain despite the unknown operation of the mystic force whose origin is sought to be investigated. Taking this view of the late seance, I am not supposed to regard it as being an absolute failure, seeing that it has settled the imputation about conjuring. That the force will be explained by natural laws I have no hesitation in believing, and that it will operate actively under certain conditions I am firmly convinced. It may be neutralised by a counteracting hostile force in the same way as is seen in biological experiments, but still—it exists.

Yours, &amp;c.,

INVESTIGATOR.

## NEW CIRCLE AT YANKEE CREEK.

The following interesting letter from Mr. Richard Gray, the chairman of the circle recently formed at the above-named place, in the county of Bendigo, to a medical friend in Sandhurst, will be read with much pleasure by our readers; the more especially as this circle is composed almost exclusively of the horny-handed sons of toil, namely, wood-splitters:—

Yankee Creek,

11th April, 1873.

DR. W.

DEAR SIR,—It is with much pleasure I am able to inform you that our circle is progressing in Spiritualism. Since I last wrote you one of our party has become developed as a trance medium; the controlling spirit has given his name as John Hurst, of Sunderland. He says he shall control the medium till he is further advanced, and then a higher spirit will take him. He will do great things through the next spirit. The spirit also told us that if our circle is not good, the medium cannot advance, also "my friends, love one another, and then your circle will progress," and "you must do unto others as you would be done by." I have asked a great number of questions, and had them all answered in a very satisfactory manner in writing, through the medium, Mr. John Harris. The first night he became entranced it gave most of us a great fright, as he appeared to be dying; we were not thinking of trance mediums at the time. We had been trying to get communication by the table that evening, but had not succeeded.

I feel sure that it will give you pleasure to hear that we are progressing; as I know you take great interest in the subject as a means of elevating mankind, and believe me when I say that I consider Spiritualism as the most valuable of revelations from God to man. I feel sure that nothing on earth but man's own wilful neglect can stop its progress.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

RICHARD GRAY.

WE are indebted to the *Herald* for the information that Mr. Charles H. Foster, the celebrated test medium, intends visiting Australia some time during the ensuing winter.

## TEST SEANCES AT CASTLEMAINE.

WE have from time to time published accounts of striking physical manifestations occurring at the house of Mr. J. P. at Castlemaine; but, as a good deal of scepticism was felt in Melbourne as to the alleged facts, an expedition was, with the consent of Mr. P., organised with the view of thoroughly testing the matter. As the names of all parties concerned have since appeared in the daily papers, we see no need for withholding them from our readers. The J. P. of our former notices is Mr. J. Paton, well known and respected at Castlemaine, where he has resided for some years; the medium is Mrs. Paton. The investigating party consisted of Messrs A. Dempster, J. Carson, T. W. Stanford, Dr. W. L. Richardson, a Reporter from the *Age* newspaper, and the writer. None of the party had witnessed the class of manifestations said to occur at Mr. Paton's; and we feel assured that the central object of their visit was not to satisfy a morbid curiosity, but to test the reality of the alleged phenomena. The party left Spencer-street Station by the afternoon train on Tuesday, April 1st, arriving at Castlemaine shortly before 7 p.m.; and after partaking of refreshments, and supplying themselves with sealing wax, they procured a car, and, accompanied by Mr. Bamford of Castlemaine, drove to Mr. Paton's residence, which is situated about one mile from Castlemaine, on the old Sandhurst road. We were cordially received by that gentleman, and ushered into a snug little room, where a cheerful fire was burning. Prior to our adjourning to the front parlor (usually used as the seance room), Mr. P. was interrogated as to the origin of the manifestations and other matters connected therewith. He said the manifestations had not come unsought, he having sat with his family experimentally some four years ago. That manifestations had frequently taken place since, when they were not looking for them; that his son had been levitated several times, and had quite recently at a sitting been placed on the shoulders of a gentleman, the brother of a late Mayor of Melbourne. The seance was to have been at 8 p.m., but owing to our late arrival, and the time occupied in questioning our host, the party did not adjourn to the seance room till 9 p.m.

The seance room was an ordinary front parlor, about twelve feet square. The house is a weatherboard one, the walls and ceiling being lath and plaster. French doors, opening to the verandah, formed the only window, and an ordinary panel door was the only other entrance to the room. The fire-place had been filled up with empty cases. The furniture consisted of a couch, seven chairs, a telescope table (closed up), some chimney ornaments, carpet, and some framed engravings on the wall. Mr. P. expressed his desire that the room should be thoroughly examined, and every precaution deemed necessary by the investigating party taken, he wished them to be thoroughly satisfied before commencing the seance. A chair was placed on the table, and the ceiling examined, then the walls, behind the pictures, the door, panels, sashes, and floor carefully felt and sounded. The french doors were nailed up, but, to make them additionally secure, seals were placed upon them; also upon the entrance door. We suggested that the opening of the fire-place should be covered with paper and sealed, which was done: and, after a careful scrutiny of the whole of the room, the party took their seats at the table with the exception of Mrs. B., who had come uninvited, and preferred to sit apart from the circle in the extreme corner of the room. Immediately the light was extinguished the table began to creak and move, and a succession of raps were heard on various parts of it. Our reporting friend desired to hold the hands of the medium, when it was found that the manifestations were diminished in strength; it was, therefore, requested that he should hold her by the sleeve instead. The rappings, &c., increased, and when we had been sitting about thirty minutes the table was violently shaken, and something heavy being heard to drop upon it, the light was immediately struck, and a hot flat-iron was discovered in the centre of it: all the visitors looked astonished. Mrs. P., in answer to a question, stated that the iron when last seen by her was at the fire in the back kitchen.

At the request of the reporter Mrs. B. left the corner of the room and took a seat on his left side. After examining the seals, and finding all intact, the light was again extinguished, and after a short interval, on a sound being heard, was re-lit, discovering a tin cake (or bread) pan. On the light being again extinguished there was a great deal of conversation and questioning, and a considerable time elapsed without any manifestation except the raps and movement of the table. After a short interval of quietness the table was again violently shaken, and something flapped heavily upon it; the candle was re-lit, and there lay a large Family Bible, about 14 by 10, and proportionately thick. After this manifestation the influence seemed to get weak, and the party adjourned to the back room for refreshments. Here an animated conversation ensued on the subject of the manifestations and mediumship generally, and it having been incidentally stated that Mrs. B. had, whilst under spirit influence, thrown a gentleman into the mesmeric state against his will, the reporter expressed great anxiety to be operated upon by her. She at first declined, but, being pressed, consented to try what could be done. She passed rapidly into the trance state, and, with the eyes closed, made energetic passes with both hands over his head for a few minutes with no apparent effect. The controlling spirit then spoke through her what professed to be a diagnosis of the condition of his mind, but whether correct or no he did not say; the conditions and surroundings were certainly not favorable for this kind of manifestation. It was now fully eleven o'clock, but several of the party being anxious to get a further manifestation, Mr. P. consented to continue as long as they desired. Shortly after re-assembling in the seance room the baby having awoke was fetched in by Mrs. P., the door being fastened after her. It was thought its presence might interfere, but we were assured it would make no difference. Mrs. P. took her seat as before next to the reporter, with the child in her arms. The child was restless, and Mrs. B. volunteered to take it; Mrs. P. at first declined, but some time afterwards handed the child to her. About fifteen minutes after Mrs. P. had parted with the child the shaking of the table, which had preceded the previous manifestations, took place, and we heard something strike the table. On a light being obtained an earthenware vessel, capable of holding about three quarts was standing on the centre of the table (about one-third full of liquid). Most of the party, including the hostess, seemed disconcerted at the novelty of this manifestation; and as it was getting late, and our car had been waiting some time, we bid our host and hostess good night, and took our departure for Castlemaine, all apparently satisfied of the bona fide nature of the manifestations witnessed. Our sceptical reporting friend was not to be convinced, if he could help it, and pointing out that the ladies had not been searched, suggested the possibility of the various articles being carried in by them! He candidly admitted to us that that was the only loophole he could find. Had the ladies been searched the phenomena would have been inexplicable. The majority of the party could not conceive of the possibility (apart from the character of the individuals and the apparent absence of motive) of the hot iron, Family Bible, and cake tin, being concealed upon the lady in the first sitting, or the large earthenware vessel being concealed about the person of the baby at the second; but as a second of the party admitted that, were he a sceptic, he should have thought it possible, it was determined to get up another expedition, and Saturday, the 12th, was suggested for it. Through some misunderstanding the party did not get away as intended, but having made our arrangements we proceeded to Castlemaine with the view of getting a seance, if possible, the following evening. Thus Mr. P. granted us, and we reached his house shortly before 8 p.m. on the 13th April. The party consisted of two gentlemen, one lady, a youth of 14, and ourself, besides Mr. and Mrs. P. We carefully examined the seance room, the seals on the French doors and chimney-piece, had not been disturbed since our previous sitting. The door was locked, and we took our position next to Mrs. P., having our hand in contact with hers. The vibration of the table and rapping commenced before the light



was extinguished, but afterwards was stronger, it was not until we had sat about thirty minutes before the violent oscillation, which precedes the manifestation, took place, and something came with considerable force upon the table. The light was immediately struck, and there lay a large iron wheel, 16 inches in diameter, 1½ inches in the flange, and 8 inches in the spindle, and weighing 16½ lbs.; the spindle had made a deep indentation in the hard walnut-wood of the table. We examined the door, &c., and, finding all secure, sat again. A short time after the table tilted up at one end and oscillated; suddenly some heavy substance was thrown on the table, and rolled on to the floor on the opposite side. On lighting up it was found to be one of the legs of the table (mahogany, and very heavy), which had been unscrewed. We counted the circles in the worm of the wooden screw, and found it required 12 complete revolutions of the leg to unscrew it. We had our hand on the medium's all the while the table was poised, and the leg was beyond the reach of her other hand. After adjusting the leg we sat again, and the table was twice lifted clear of the floor, and suspended from four to eight inches, all hands being joined on the table at the time. Whilst so suspended the sensation was as though it were strung up by india rubber bands from the ceiling—if pressed upon it would yield, and rise when the pressure was relaxed. Then came a loud sharp sound on the table, such as might be produced by a thick whip-thong or flat piece of leather. This was repeated, and the manifestations getting fainter, we adjourned to the other room for a time. On returning we re-searched the room and bolted the door; in answer to our host's question we were informed that the controlling intelligence was one "Jack Goodfellow," and he promised us a manifestation, our host remarking that he never disappointed when he promised. In about four minutes a large iron kettle, about a third full of warm water, was placed on the table; the smoke and soot were on the sides, which exhibited no signs of friction. Something struck Mr. P. on the shoulder and dropped on the floor; it was found to be a knife he had formerly used. In answer to a question Jack Goodfellow said he could do no more that night, so we broke up the seance. We measured the distance from the fire-place where the kettle was said to have been, and found it 24 paces.

On the evening of the 19th ult. another seance was held at the same hour under the most stringent conditions. The visitors on this occasion consisted of Hon. James Service, Mr. Stanford, Mr. Charles Bright, Mr. Black, of the Melbourne Detective Force, Mr. H. G. Turner, as representative of *The Argus*, and Mr. Williams, of the staff of *The Age*. In addition to the detective who brought his professional ability to bear upon the premises in the vain hope of discovering some trap-door or hidden panel, a weighing-machine was procured and placed in the sitting-room, so that it should be impossible for any persons to bring in weighty articles concealed about their clothes. Each member taking part in the investigation was weighed on entering the room, there being present besides the visitors named, Mr. and Mrs. P., and their eldest son. Detective Black subsequently left the room, and before returning examined some of the articles that were said to have made their appearance at previous sittings, and secured the doors of the kitchen and passage. The seance was continued for two hours, but nothing occurred save the violent rocking and rapping of the table and the removal of the leg situated to the right of Mrs. P., which was cast upon the table. A second seance was held by the same investigators on the following evening, a younger son of Mr. P.'s being also present. As it was thought possible that the examination of the external articles might interfere with the operation of the psychic force assumed to be brought to bear upon them, it was resolved that the precautions taken should be confined to weighing Mr. P. and family, and carefully inspecting and sealing up the room. The seance again was an unsatisfactory one. The only article introduced was a tumbler full of water, which weighed only 15ozs., Mrs. P. being found 8ozs. short. Thus ended the investigation. Some newspaper writers, with customary pre-

judice and lack of logic, have commented upon it as a marked instance of the detection of imposture, overlooking, as is their wont, the difference between what might possibly be accomplished by trickery, and what is proved to be accomplished by trickery. The matter demands and will doubtless receive further scrutiny.

## REVIEW.

### A SPIRITUAL "QUARTERLY."\*

On the 1st January, 1873, was published the pioneer "Quarterly" of Spiritualism, a copy of which now lies before us. Laughed at, pooh-poohed, ridiculed, denounced, exploded, crushed under "the heel of authority," extinguished, the new revelation of old spiritual phenomena and philosophy has for five and twenty years struggled upward to the light of day, rising the fresher for every burst of derision, growing in strength after every attempt to impede its progress, until it has now attained to the dignity of a quarterly journal, of 144 pages, devoted to its history and elucidation. Almost every portion of the civilized globe can boast of its spiritual press, weekly or monthly. America—leader of the modern world in most things—has been the earliest to establish the more bulky and pretentious periodical.

Speaking in general terms of Dr. Brittan's publication we may state that it is most presentable in appearance, requiring only a warm coating of advertising pages to make it resemble the "Westminster" or "Edinburgh." In typography, it can boast complete equality with those or any other reviews. Its first article, a biographical sketch of the Hon. N. P. Tallmadge, is faced by an admirable steel engraving of that distinguished spiritualist. The article is from the editor's pen, and gives an excellent *resumé* of Mr. Tallmadge's career as senator, Governor of Wisconsin, and religious reformer. It was through the instrumentality of his friend Judge Edwards that Tallmadge was induced to investigate Spiritualism. He began his task, like so many others have done, a thorough-paced sceptic, but when he once became convinced he never for an instant shirked the duties which such conviction brought upon him. Dr. Brittan writes of him with the love of a friend and the sympathy of a fellow laborer in the field of free thought.

One of the best papers in the journal is by Professor J. R. Buchanan, and is entitled "Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century." A more searching and thoroughly scientific article we have rarely had the pleasure of perusing. The author has evidently found a difficulty in compressing into the limits of a magazine article matter which might well fill a volume. His lucubration is consequently somewhat "stiff" reading, but the labor it asks is amply repaid by the result.

We prefer to cull a specimen page of the new periodical from a lighter composition bearing the title of "Souls and scenes in spirit life," contributed by Fanny Green M'Dougal. This lady purports to narrate, as mediumistically disclosed to her, some passages in the career of a newly emancipated spirit. The account opens as follows:—

The period of earthly probation being at length complete, by the Sage, Swedenborg, I was led away to be instructed in the real aspects and conditions of Spirit Life. As we passed along it seemed more as if the scenes were approaching us than we them. I had observed this phenomenon several times before, and I confess it puzzled me.

The Sage perceived the silent question, and thus responded: "Dost thou remember the childish illusion of flying shores, and hills, and road-sides, while the boat, or carriage, that was really in rapid motion, seemed to stand still? This phenomenon is owing to the same cause, the rapidity of our own motion, which we can perceive only as reflected from surrounding objects."

While he was yet speaking, a certain outward, or onward pressure, was arrested, giving much the same feeling that a sudden check of speed, whether physical or mental, did in the earth-life.

It was a sense of revulsion, as if a strong tide were turned suddenly back upon itself while yet pressing hard headward. Until this I hardly knew that we moved at all.

\* Brittan's Journal. *Spiritual Science, Literature, Art, and Inspiration*. Published quarterly. S. B. Brittan, M.D., Editor. New York Standard Spiritual Library Association.

"It is even so," said the Sage, as I staggered under the pressure of the inverted power. "Transitions are always more or less difficult and painful, and even here we can offer no exception to the established rule. In every change from state to state, we must enter in the position of a novice, to try all things, and determine for ourselves. The true human Soul must always be an experimenter. That is, it must learn by its own experience. Without this never was there made a single step of progress. But look more closely, my son, and tell me what thou seest."

"I perceive that not only we are moving, but the objects we approach are moving also. Are the trees and hills, the objects and scenes of Nature, really unfixed and floating? What is this new wonder? Speak, I beseech thee!"

"This," he answered, "is the common attraction of like to like, as of thought to thought, or will to will. It is maintained by the presence of a reciprocal power, or action, and is chiefly due to the principle of spontaneous emanations. Thus, when I desire to approach you, I send out an aroma, which, if your organism is sufficiently fine and delicate, will find a thousand avenues of entrance, and inform you of my desire. If there is kinship between us, the power sent forth attracts you; and, in return, you send out a response, which attracts me. And thus we spontaneously come together. This power is present, if not active, in all things; though not yet always manifest to thy inexperienced spirit."

"Ah!" I exclaimed joyfully, "I now see how and why thoughts so truly respond to each other. And this also accounts for the miracle of spirits sometimes being so suddenly present when we had imagined them far away. But, as it appears to me, it wholly fails to account for the effect on material things, as this moving landscape—this magnificent panorama, which really seems inspired with life."

"And, truly, seeming *is*," answered the Sage, laconically. "Know, then, that after their degree and kind, all things have life. This life is always twofold. That is to say, it has an in-flowing and an outflowing power. The first is magnetic and conservative, the second electrical and diffusive. These are the bases of all power and the parents of all motion. You will find magnetism in the mineral; magnetism and vitality in the plant; magnetism, vitality, sensation and voluntary motion in the animal; magnetism, vitality, sensation, motion, intelligence and individuality in the human; and of all these the corresponding outflowing power is an emanation, which is more or less potent and refined. In free, or perfectly natural conditions, the attraction operates according to the degree of its intensity and composition or state. But when any intelligence governs the movement, the will power takes the helm; and the grosser or more material conditions are thus brought into obedience, or at least partially overcome."

"And hereby hangs a secret for the people of Earth. When magnetism, with its essential relations of positive and negative, is thoroughly understood, men will learn to establish corresponding points, the positive here, the negative there, and to maintain between them all kinds and degrees of motion and power. But we are touching on deep and inexhaustible themes. The time will come for these also; but not yet."

As he spoke, his whole being became suddenly luminous. I looked, and perceived the tide of great thoughts, as it flowed through him, till my yet unpractised eyes fell, blinded with the brightness.

After a little he said more quietly: "Look yonder;" at the same time stretching out his arm toward seemingly immeasurable depths of ether. As he did so, banners and curtains were furled away, aerial doors were opened, and the illimitable heavens appeared in view. Group within group, system beyond system, they were all seen, shining through the pure crystalline, and evidently in rapid motion. This was the first time I had witnessed the actual movements of the heavenly orbs. My heart heaved, and my brain whirled with a strange, ecstatic sense of delight, not unmixed with terror. For a moment it seemed as if I should be drawn into the profound vortex of fire in which all attraction centred, and toward which all motion tended.

It was but an instant, when I felt the strong reaction of my human power. I stood erect, growing taller and stronger. I, a son of God! I, a brother of Angels! I, in my own right, an immortal!—would any dead matter, though it be in the form of quickest fire, swallow up ME—or take me from myself—or control my actions—or shorten my will? No, never.

In an article headed "Labor, wages, and capital," Mr. J. B. Ingalls discusses some of the social problems of the day, the solution of which is bound to prove one of the outcomes of spiritual enlightenment. The author contends that "the claim of the political economists, that profits constitute the great mainspring of all economic action is as philosophically absurd as it is morally degrading," and gives a forcible summary of the evils which have arisen from the gradual separation of wealth from the labour which produces it. He has no quack remedy to offer for these, but looks hopefully to the dissemination of knowledge as the only antidote for grievances which have their root in ignorance.

Two or three brief papers—one on "Invisible Artists" by the editor being especially noticeable—lead us to a charming contribution by Hon. J. W. Edmonds—"The Future Life." This veteran of Spiritualism gives in this sketch some incidents from his clairvoyant experience of a quarter of a century's duration. It is to men like him

we must look if we would learn what Spiritualism is, and what it portends; not to shallow and conceited critics who fancy they have mastered its marvels by skimming the pages of two or three volumes, or attending a possibly abortive seance.

Brittan's journal contains able compositions in prose and verse besides those we have noticed, and we can very cordially commend it to the attention of our readers.

## Answers to Questions

*The growing desire for information on all subjects connected with Spiritualism and Free Religious thought, has induced us to reserve a portion of our space for the publication of answers to questions, practical and Spiritual. We therefore invite the public to send us questions on any subject of general import, the most important of which will be submitted to the controlling spirit of an advanced local circle, and published with the answer as space admits, those questions of minor importance which we feel ourselves competent to answer will be answered by the Editor. We wish it to be distinctly understood that no personal questions will receive attention.*

WHAT is your opinion as to the manifestations that are said to have occurred at Castlemaine, and which formed the subject of a recent investigation?

Such manifestations have been produced, and can and will be produced again, but are less likely to occur under circumstances such as attended the investigation you speak of. The best tests are given when they are not sought for, because conditions are the most suitable. These manifestations are conducted by spirits of a low grade in the scale of development, and who would no doubt be very anxious to do all in their power; but there are others more advanced who did not aid them in this case, but rather stood in the way to hinder, as I would have done, had I been present. You know our opinion of these manifestations: we have always impressed upon you the necessity of avoiding them, unless they be of a very high and noble character—and then most assuredly not suited for newspaper reporters, or others who are attracted only by a spirit of material curiosity. Had we thought it wise to develop your circle for physical media, it could have been done, but only to the great hindrance of that higher and more spiritual development which is really beneficial to humanity. You have but to review the history of Spiritualism in this part of the world to see that the physical manifestations have been attended with but little success; no spiritualists, who are truly valuable as such, have been attracted to you by these manifestations, but rather regard them as injurious, mean, and below their sense of what Spiritualism is and must be. The philosophy is the only part of Spiritualism that is of any value to man; the effects of a lower or physical character are but as the knocking at the door to gain admission. But the outflow, the unfolding of years of development, is Spiritualism in its advanced sense, and for this there are many who knock and will not gain admittance, for they are not attired, not suited to be guests,—therefore they are rejected. It is better that they remain where they are, until nature has refined them, and made them more capable of appreciating the noblest principles of their own beings. They have not the spiritual perception to see the superiority of the higher forms, and are indeed not suited to belong to the fold, yet are attracted, and seek for that they can understand, and for which they must of necessity depend upon lower influences, which are less reliable, and sometimes controlled against their will, and defeated in their objects by influences of a higher character.

As to the genuineness of these phenomena, there is mediumistic power in the family alluded to,—sufficient to enable spirits to bring into the room ponderable substances of great size; but excitement—strong desire—on the part of the medium or mediums would form a great difficulty for any spirit to contend with. For your satisfaction I will briefly describe the mode by which these manifestations are performed. Influences, chemical or otherwise, which I cannot describe to you, inasmuch as you know of nothing resembling them—



natural in the spheres, as your atmosphere, your electricity, your magnetism—are involved in the process, in addition to these other particles are required in order to act upon matter; some of these chemical particles are found only in mediums, while others are provided by the spirits. Four or five spirits are generally required to produce these manifestations, one of whom has the direction of all. Some hours previous to the time arranged for the sitting, a process of abstracting these various chemical particles from the medium is commenced, and they are passed through the walls of the apartment as you would force water or gas through a bed of sand, or other filtering substance by pressure—as oil, for instance, can be passed through earthenware. Thus the wall is prepared, the influence not stopping there, but being carried onwards to the objects intended to be brought in, and which are permeated with the influence drawn from the medium. The operation is greatly assisted if the mind of the medium is calmly and determinedly concentrated upon these objects; then the influences on her part and on the part of the spirits work smoothly and in harmony. Thus at the time of sitting, a pathway is formed between the object and the medium,—resembling electricity in appearance, though it is not such. The spirits would now be placed at both ends, the controlling spirits by the medium, the others as assistants by the objects to be brought. At a given time the substance is lifted, in the same way as a piece of metal is lifted by your loadstone, the principle of affinity existing in both—the one drawn from the man or woman who is the medium, and the corresponding influence held by the spirits, chemically prepared. The object is brought along freely until it comes in contact with the substance through which it must be passed, when the two may be disorganised—usually only one. I cannot explain to you how this is done, unless in this way. When water is subjected to heat it slowly expands, until the vessel containing it is filled with vapor; it expands further, until a large space is occupied by these particles, which are loosened out by the chemical action of heat. In this condition you may walk through it without getting wet. Under reduced temperature, these particles form again into drops, and at last return to the original state,—somewhat purified. In like manner the wall opens out, and the object acted upon is passed through when the breach again closes by the law of affinity—the law which caused things in the first place to unite, and in the absence of which all things would fall to pieces, as a mass of sand does. Chemical affinity is as little understood by chemists as matter itself—why different substances or the various particles of a substance hold together, they know not; they cannot tell you why glue causes the surface of a fracture to cling together with the original strength.

Suffice it to say, that spirits,—who have, in their study of these things, passed far beyond the dreams of your scientists,—succeed, under favorable circumstances, in passing solid objects through other intervening solid substances. The liability to failure will be understood when the delicate nature of the influences involved, and the many disturbing forces that attend the circle and medium, are borne in mind.

### RECLAIMED.

(Continued.)

The brain is a material organ which will decay like every other organ of your material body. But that internal power which is your immortal nature, Mary, acts upon this material organism when bringing itself in contact with a material world. But, this immortal nature of yours does not need a material organism to bring it in contact with things spiritual and eternal. It is with this internal spirit-power of vision that you now behold me; (an inhabitant of spirit-land). It is with the same developed power of perception that you are enabled to perceive these wondrous creations of omnipotence, to hear these delightful sounds, and if you will, pluck these celestial flowers and fruits and enter into familiar intercourse with me. Your spirit my dear sister, had an existence before it became an inhabitant of mortal flesh, it is, therefore, immortal, eternal, the

offspring of Infinitude. God has given it a material existence to increase its happiness, nobility and grandeur that it may be an individuality composed of spirit and matter, and, although, while in its material state the internal power of vision, is beclouded; and consequently much suffering has to be endured through error, yet this is all made clear to those who have passed through the transition of death. The generality of mankind have to wait until the grosser portion of their material nature has returned to earth and gone to decay before they can learn these great truths. In the state in which I live mankind have a material body as you see I have, but of so pure and refined a nature that it cannot be seen by mortal or material eyes. But you see Mary, to your spirit vision my hands and arms are real solid flesh. So you understand now that I am a woman, like unto yourself, only my body is raised a spiritual body, but yours is still as mine was once, a gross material body. My body is made of the most refined portions of the elements of matter, and consequently indestructible and eternal. It was for the purpose of giving me such a body, that my heavenly Father gave me a material existence and it is with the same object that Omnipotence peoples the material universe.

Therefore, said the beautiful spirit to me, when the body and mind are healthy and harmonious the "imagination," as you earth-people call it, beholds things beautiful in the spiritual realm of God's universe.

When the body and mind are discordant this spiritual power of vision is diseased, and sees spiritual objects disfigured and distorted.

Understand me then, "Mary," that the human imagination is man's power to see such things as God has already created, but not to create them, any more than your material eye creates the material objects you behold. You know very well that the things of earth are beautiful or otherwise, according to the condition of the individual who looks upon them.

(To be Continued).

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